



From Lord Avebury
Chairman
Parliamentary Human Rights Group

House of Lords

March 28, 1991

Dear Carmel,

You asked me to see how much of the interview with the SG I could reconstruct from memory.

First, I asked him whether, in the consultations he was undertaking in pursuance of Resolution 37/30, he was working within the framework of the two Resolutions of the Security Council and the eight Resolutions of the General Assembly, and he gave a definite yes to this.

He said that he (or was it Mr Ahmed) was always ready to see East Timorese, and he had in fact met Jose Ramos Horta and Guterrez. There is no reason why the Convergencia should not gain an audience if they consider it would be useful.

The views of the people of East Timor would be taken into consideration, in accordance with Resolutions 1514 and 1541 of 1960. This did not necessarily imply a referendum, and from time to time the United Nations had accepted other tests of popular will (I'm not sure what cases were being referred to here and this is something I mean to clarify in correspondence).

Mr Ahmed said that the letter to President Suharto, in which reference was made to the visit by Portuguese Parliamentarians, was signed by the SG and not himself. It should not be taken to mean that the visit would lead directly to the removal of the question from the UN agenda, but merely that it could pave the way for a solution which in turn would allow the matter to be removed. It was not for the Secretary General to suggest what the ingredients of the solution might be; that was a matter for Indonesia and Portugal. Nor could he be precise on how the visit might create the necessary conditions for a solution. Again, that could only be worked out in discussion.

All questions of self-determination were equally important. East Timor deserved the same attention as Namibia or Western Sahara.

There was no conflict of interest within the UN between the need to cooperate with Indonesia as co-chairman of the Cambodia peace process and the need to press Indonesia on the question of East Timor. The two issues were entirely separate and independent.

That's about all I can recall, apart from the fact that Gary gave an excellent account of his impressions arising from the Australian Parliamentarians' visit, and I suggest he be asked to let us have a note for circulation to members of PET.

After the meeting someone, it may have been the Ambassador of Vanuatu, suggested that we write personally to each member of the Committee of 24, in addition to giving oral evidence. I rather like the idea; I could easily do a mail merge, given the names and addresses.

April, 1991